done by the State Governments themselves as per their own priorities and the Central assistance to the States is given in the form of block loans and grants and is not tied to any sector. The expenditure incurred by the State Governments on irrigation, flood control and command area development in the Ninth Plan and the outlay for the Tenth Plan for these sectors are Rs. 61,002.05 crores and Rs. 92,143.53 crores respectively. The Central sector outlay for water resources, which is fully in the form of gross budgetary support is mainly for activities like data collection, ground water exploration, R&D, flood forecasting, monitoring, investigations and centrally sponsored schemes. The Tenth Plan Central sector outlay for water resources has a 57% step up over the Ninth Plan outlay and almost a 100% step up over the Ninth Plan expenditure of Rs. 1845 crores. The Central Govt. is also assisting the States since the Ninth Plan for early completion of on-going irrigation projects through the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme. Till March 2003, Rs. 11,541.73 crores has been released, under the programme over and above the Central sector outlay.

The Central Government has set up a Task Force on 13.12.2002 under the Chairmanship of Shri Suresh Prabhu, Member of Parliament, on interlinking of rivers to bring about a consensus among States, provide guidance on nature of appraisal of individual projects and modalities for project funding. In the Action Plan-I submitted by the Task Force on 30.4.2003, it has been indicated that the feasibility reports for all the 30 links is planned to be completed by December, 2005 and the detailed project reports for all acceptable links by December, 2006. The firm estimate of cost of interlinks proposals will become available only on completion of the DPRs. The Ministry of Water Resources have allocated Rs. 85 crores in the Tenth Plan for the National Water Development Agency for investigation work on interlinking of rivers. For 2003-04, the approved outlay of the Ministry of Water Resources has been stepped up by Rs. 4 crores to support the Task Force on interlinking of rivers.

Credit support to farmers

1303. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any action plan for implementation during the Tenth Five Year Plan for providing timely and

adequate credit support to farmers particularly to small and marginal farmers; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Government of India has initiated various policy measures to improve the access of farmers to institutional sources of credit. The emphasis of these policies has continued to be on progressive institutionalisation for providing timely and adequate credit support to farmers with particular focus on small and marginal farmers and weaker sections of society to enable them to adopt modern technology and improved agricultural practices for increasing agricultural production and productivity.

2. Some of the important measures that have been or are being taken to provide increased flow of credit to the agriculture sector are as under:

* The instrument of Kisan Credit Scheme (KCC) has been introduced to provide timely credit support from the banking system to the farmers for cultivation needs including purchase of inputs in a flexible and cost effective manner. As on 31st March, 2003, cumulatively 313.44 lakh KCCs involving sanctioned bank loan of Rs. 76,498.80 crore were issued to the farmers by Cooperative Banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Commercial Banks. Personal Accident Insurance Scheme was formulated for KCC holders to cover them against accidental death/personal disability.

* A Supplementary credit delivery mechanism through Self Help Groups (SHGs) assimilating the flexibility and responsiveness of the informal sector with resources and network of the banking system has become an integral part of the rural financial infrastructure providing financial services to the poor in a sustainable manner. Upto 31st March, 2003, 7.17 lakh SHGs have been formed covering an estimated number of 1.16 crore families. Cumulatively, banks have provided financial assistance of Rs. 2048 crore to the SHGs and NABARD has extended refinance assistance of Rs. 1419 crore. During the year 2002-03, bank finance to SHGs was of the order of Rs. 1022. 33 crore with NABARD refinance of Rs. 622.33 crore.

3. In addition, large number of credit linked subsidy schemes are also under implementation.

4. As per NABARD, the total quantum of ground level credit flow for agriculture and allied activities provided by Cooperative Banks, Commercial Banks, RRBs and other agencies increased from Rs. 62,045 crore during 2001-02 to an estimated level of Rs. 75,000 crore in 2002-03 this is further expected to increase on yearly basis during Tenth Plan.

5. With a view to strengthening the flow of credit to small and marginal farmers, relaxations in regard to margin money requirements, security norms etc. have been extended to such borrowers.

Allocation for water resources and Telecommunications

1304. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of allocation made in the Ninth and Tenth Five Year Plans for water Resources and Telecommunications sectors;

(b) whether Government propose to reorient and give priority to linking of rivers; and

(c) if so, the reallocation proposed to solve the Water shortages at several States as surplus water of Brahmaputra is going waste this year too?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) The approved outlay for water resources and telecommunications in the Ninth and Tenth Five Year Plans are as under:

(Rs. crores)

Sector	Ninth Plan	Tenth Plan
Telecommunications	46442.04*@	86984**
Water Resources	2291.25	3600
* GBS	44.04	
** GBS	1500	

@ actual allcation during Ninth Plan on the basis of Annual Plan approved outlay was Rs. 84783.90 crores.